

CIA 36209

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CIA 49402

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22 October 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR THE INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT : IAC List of Indicators of Soviet Intention to Initiate General War

ENCLOSURE: Proposed IAC List of Indicators

1. In accordance with the IAC decision of 30 August 1951, a proposed list of indicators of Soviet aggressive intentions is transmitted herewith. The indicators listed represent condensations and combinations of those submitted by the IAC agencies.

2. The sixteen indicators and their subordinate elements describe actions which might be undertaken by the USSR in preparation for an open full-scale military offensive launched across zonal or international boundaries. For the most part, these actions represent improvements in Soviet military capabilities. While no single action, when undertaken, would necessarily signify that war is imminent, the generally simultaneous occurrence of several or many such actions would indicate that an abnormally high level of preparedness for war existed in the USSR.

3. The Ad Hoc Committee recognized that the existence of a high level of preparedness does not, by itself, imply that the USSR intends to initiate a full-scale war. In attempting to specify indicators of intention to initiate general war, the Committee found that the concept of such an indicator was very vague and that the basis for inferring this particular intention was obscure. It felt that a re-examination of the indicator approach to the intention problem might be desirable.

4. Meanwhile, the Committee proceeded on the assumption that the nearest approximation to indicators of intention to initiate a general war are represented by preparatory actions. The evaluation of information relevant to these indicators is at present complicated by the advanced state of readiness of the Soviet armed forces, by the existence of a state of war in the Far East, and by the fact that the USSR, in order to achieve surprise, might launch an offensive without undertaking further preparatory action. Nevertheless, because the USSR may take steps to raise its level of readiness before starting a war, the proposed list of indicators should be useful in determining Soviet progress toward maximum preparedness and Soviet intentions based thereon.


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5. In the selection of indicators, no consideration has been given to the likelihood that pertinent information will be available in time. An attempt has been made to select indicators which describe actions occurring within one to two months prior to the initiation of hostilities and which reflect offensive rather than defensive preparations and plans, although they are frequently indistinguishable. No attempt has been made to list negative indicators or to isolate preparatory actions which would be peculiar to specific regions; the list is applicable, in principle, to all areas from which the USSR might launch an offensive. The arrangement of the sixteen indicators and their subordinate elements in the list does not reflect any judgment of relative importance.

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FOR THE DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE:


KINGMAN DOUGLASS
Assistant Director,
Current Intelligence

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